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Training by employers reglects changing workplace

Nearly two-thirds (61 per cent) of employers provided training for their employees in the 12 months ending February 1997 according to a survey on employer training released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

While most (53 per cent) employers provided unstructured training such as unplanned on-the-job training, 35 per cent of employers provided structured training such as training courses and workshops. Almost half (43 per cent) of all employers who provided training provided only unstructured training.

Half of the employers who provided structured training had increased their expenditure compared with the previous 12 months. Technological change was given as the main reason for increasing training expenditure by a third of employers. Almost one in five employers who provided structured training said it was the one factor which most increased their training expenditure.

An external training provider was used by the vast majority (89 per cent) of employers who provided structured training. Almost half of these employers used TAFE. About two-thirds of TAFE users reported TAFE as the training provider used most often.

Employers gave as the main reasons for limiting expenditure on structured training: employees already adequately trained (44 per cent); time constraints (34 per cent); and cost constraints (32 per cent).

Over one-third (36 per cent) of employers who provided unstructured training increased the overall amount provided compared to the previous 12 months. The recruitment of new employees and technological change were the most frequently reported reasons for increased levels. Of employers who provided unstructured training, just over a third of those who employed labourers, elementary clerical and service workers or production and transport workers reported that unstructured training was the only form of training provided for those occupations.

The vast majority (88 per cent) of employers who experienced a significant change in their operations during the period provided training, with over half (57 per cent) providing structured training and over three-quarters (78 per cent) providing unstructured training. The introduction of new technology was the most frequently reported cause of significant change.

Details are in **Employer Training Practices, Australia** (cat. no. 6356.0) available from ABS Bookshops.

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